

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00 SCEM-02 INT-08

FPC-01 SCI-06 NSF-04 NEA-10 TRSE-00 OMB-01 DRC-01

/190 W

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R 041500Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8823

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, PO

SUBJECT: CAETANO DISCUSSES GASOLINE SHORTAGE.

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER CAETANO, IN UNANNOUNCED NATIONWIDE "FIRESIDE CHAT" DECEMBER 3, ADDRESSED TWO TOPICS OF CURRENT CONCERN: FUEL SHORTAGE AND RECENT DECISION BY THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT TO EXPEL PORTUGUESE FROM ITS TERRITORY BORDERING ON CABINDA AND ANGOLA. (SEPTTEL). REGARDING PETROLEUM, CAETANO DECRIED "TERRIBLE SELFISHNESS" OF THOSE PORTUGUESE HOARDING SCARCE GASOLINE, AND WARNED OF MORE DRASTIC MEASURES TO COME IF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF SPEED LIMITS AND NO WEEKEND SALES DOES NOT RESULT IN REDUCED CONSUMPTION. END SUMMARY

1. CAETANO ADDRESSED THE NATION FOR TWENTY MINUTES EVENING OF DECEMBER 3. PM CRITICIZED ARABS FOR "SELFISHLY" SACRIFICING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF THE REST OF WORLD. HE SAID WHATEVER
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JUSTICE OF ARAB CAUSE, THEY SHOULD NOT DEFEND IT BY RECOURSE

TO BOYCOTT. HE ACCUSED ARABS, WHO HE SAID DERIVE ENORMOUS BENEFITS FROM OIL WITHOUT HAVING HAD TO INVEST ANY OF THEIR OWN LABOR OR MONEY IN EXTRACTING IT, OF DELIBERATELY TRYING TO CREATE CHAOS AND CONFUSION IN THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD.

2. CAETANO DECRIED LACK OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FACE OF PRESENT CRISIS, AND BERATED PORTUGUESE FOR MAKING A BAD SITUATION WORSE BY NOT COOPERATING WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS MEASURES TO ECONOMIZE FUEL. IF PEOPLE WOULD ONLY RESTRICT THEIR FUEL CONSUMPTION AND DRIVE MORE SLOWLY, HE ADVISED, FUEL SUPPLIES WOULD BE NORMAL AND PRESENT MILD RESTRICTIONS WOULD SUFFICE.

3. HE ADMONISHED SOME FOR THEIR "TERRIBLE SELFISHNESS" AND "STUPIDITY" IN HOARDING GASOLINE AND OTHER SCARCE COMMODITIES, AND WARNED THAT UNLESS INTELLIGENT AND HONEST COOPERATION IS FORTHCOMING MORE DRASTIC MEASURES WILL HAVE TO BE IMPOSED. HE WARNED PEOPLE NOT TO CONTINUE PANIC BUYING SPREES LEST CATASTROPHE ENSUE.

4. COMMENT: FACT THAT CAETANO'S SPEECH NOT PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED LED MANY TO BELIEVE HE WOULD ANNOUNCE SOME FORM OF FUEL RATIONING, AN ALTERNATIVE WHICH MANY OF THOUSANDS WAITING IN INTERMINABLE LINES AT SERVICE STATIONS WOULD PROBABLY WELCOME. HOWEVER, CAETANO SAID NOTHING NEW, AND LAMENTABLY FEW WILL HEED HIS CALL FOR INCREASED CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS. AS LINES GROW LONGER AND TEMPER SHORTER, THE DEMAND FOR RATIONING WILL INCREASE AND THE GOP WILL COME UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO BEGIN RATIONING, WHICH MANY FEEL IS NOW INEVITABLE.
POST

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